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Programme of activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People

Report of the Third Committee

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I. Introduction

1. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 19 September 2003, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its fifty-eighth session the item entitled "Programme of activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People" and to allocate it to the Third Committee.

2. The Committee considered the item at its 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 27th and 28th meetings, on 22, 23, 29 and 30 October 2003. An account of the Committee's discussion is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.3/58/SR.21-23, 27 and 28).

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Relevant chapters of the report of the Economic and Social Council for 2003;[1]

(b) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the implementation of the programme of activities for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (A/58/289).

4. At the 21st meeting, on 22 October, the Director of the New York Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs made introductory statements (see A/C.3/58/SR.21).

[1] A/58/3 (Parts I and II); for the final text, see *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/58/3/Rev.1).

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5. At the same meeting, the Committee engaged the above-mentioned speakers in a dialogue, in which the representatives of Mexico and Canada took part (see A/C.3/58/SR.21).

II. Consideration of draft resolution A/C.3/58/L.27

6. At the 27th meeting, on 29 October, the representative of Finland, on behalf of Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, introduced a draft resolution entitled "International Decade of the World's Indigenous People" (A/C.3/58/L.27). Subsequently, Armenia, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Costa Rica, Dominica, El Salvador, Gabon, Paraguay, South Africa, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Timor-Leste joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

7. At its 28th meeting, on 30 October, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/58/L.27 without a vote (see para. 8).

III. Recommendation of the Third Committee

8. The Third Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

International Decade of the World's Indigenous People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 57/192 of 18 December 2002 and previous resolutions on the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, including resolution 50/157 of 21 December 1995, by which it adopted the programme of activities for the Decade,

Recalling also its resolution 40/131 of 13 December 1985, by which it established the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations, and its resolution 57/191 of 18 December 2002, as a result of which the Trust Fund in Support of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues was established,

Recalling further that the goal of the Decade is to strengthen international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous people in such areas as human rights, the environment, development, education and health, and that the theme of the Decade is "Indigenous people: partnership in action",

Welcoming, in this respect, the contributions made to the realization of the goals of the Decade by the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at its first and second sessions, held in New York from 13 to 24 May 2002 and from 12 to 23 May 2003, respectively,

Welcoming also the contributions made by the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held at Durban, South Africa, from 31 August to 7 September 2001, and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held at Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September 2002, to the realization of the goals of the Decade,

Welcoming further the reports of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, submitted to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-eighth[1] and fifty-ninth sessions,[2]

Recognizing the importance of consultation and cooperation with indigenous people in planning and implementing the programme of activities for the Decade, the need for adequate financial support from the international community, including support from within the United Nations system, and the need for adequate coordination and communication channels,

Urging all parties to continue to use their best efforts to achieve the goals of the Decade,

1. *Takes note* of the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the implementation of

[1] E/CN.4/2002/97 and Add.1.

[2] E/CN.4/2003/90 and Add.1-3.

the programme of activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People;[3]

2. *Affirms its conviction* of the value and diversity of the cultures and forms of social organization of indigenous people and its conviction that the development of indigenous people within their countries will contribute to the socio-economic, cultural and environmental advancement of all the countries of the world;

3. *Emphasizes* the importance of strengthening the human and institutional capacity of indigenous people to develop their own solutions to their problems;

4. *Requests* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as coordinator for the Decade:

(a) To continue to promote the objectives of the Decade, taking into account, in the fulfilment of his functions, the special concerns of indigenous people;

(b) To give due regard to the dissemination, from within existing resources and voluntary contributions, of information on the situation, cultures, languages, rights and aspirations of indigenous people and, in that context, to consider the possibility of organizing projects, special events, exhibitions and other activities addressed to the public, in particular to young people;

(c) To submit, through the Secretary-General, an annual report to the General Assembly on the implementation of the programme of activities for the Decade;

5. *Reaffirms* the adoption of a declaration on the rights of indigenous people as a major objective of the Decade, and underlines the importance of effective participation by indigenous representatives in the open-ended intersessional working group of the Commission on Human Rights charged with developing a draft declaration on the rights of indigenous people, established pursuant to Commission resolution 1995/32 of 3 March 1995;[4]

6. *Welcomes* the active consideration by the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues of a number of topics pertaining to the Decade, as reflected in its report to the Economic and Social Council on its second session,[5] and encourages the Forum to continue to work towards the realization of the goals of the Decade;

7. *Encourages* Governments to support the Decade by:

(a) Preparing relevant programmes, plans and reports in relation to the Decade, in consultation with indigenous people;

(b) Seeking means, in consultation with indigenous people, of giving indigenous people greater responsibility for their own affairs and an effective voice in decisions on matters that affect them;

(c) Establishing national committees or other mechanisms involving indigenous people to ensure that the objectives and activities of the Decade are planned and implemented on the basis of full partnership with indigenous people;

(d) Contributing to the following funds:

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[3] A/58/289.

[4] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1995, Supplement No. 3* and corrigenda (E/1995/23 and Corr.1 and 2), chap. II, sect. A.

[5] Ibid., *2003, Supplement No. 23* (E/2003/43).

(i) The United Nations Trust Fund for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People;

(ii) The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations, in order to assist indigenous representatives in participating in the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and the open-ended intersessional working group of the Commission on Human Rights charged with elaborating a draft declaration on the rights of indigenous people;

(iii) The Trust Fund in Support of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues;

(iv) The Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean;

(e) Identifying resources for activities designed to implement the goals of the Decade, in cooperation with indigenous people and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;

8. *Invites* United Nations financial and development institutions, operational programmes and the specialized agencies and secretariats, as well as other regional and international organizations, in accordance with the existing procedures of their governing bodies:

(a) To give increased priority and resources to improving the conditions of indigenous people, with particular emphasis on the needs of those people in developing countries, inter alia, through the preparation of specific programmes of action for the implementation of the goals of the Decade, within their areas of competence;

(b) To launch special projects, through appropriate channels and in cooperation with indigenous people, to strengthen their community-level initiatives and to facilitate the exchange of information and expertise among indigenous people and other relevant experts;

(c) To designate focal points for the coordination of activities relating to the Decade with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;

and commends those institutions, programmes, agencies and regional and international organizations that have already done so;

9. *Recommends* that the Secretary-General ensure coordinated follow-up to the recommendations concerning indigenous people of relevant United Nations conferences;

10. *Requests* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to submit, through the Secretary-General, a report on the implementation of the programme of activities for the Decade to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session;

11. *Takes note* of Economic and Social Council decision 2003/306 of 25 July 2003 concerning the initiation of its review of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 50/157;

12. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-ninth session an item entitled "Programme of activities for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, 1995-2004".